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COMMENTARY

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Pursuing a divided course on Israel State Dept. vs. Congress

While Congress votes great sums for aid to Israel, the State Department pursues policies that can only lead to a sellout to the Arabs.

The department's attitude was summed up for me by one of its Arabists who said, not for attribution: "Forget the Jews. Forget Israel. They're finished, and a good thing, too!"

So high-ranking State Department officials scurry here and yon — wooing King Hussein of Jordan while he alternately makes demands, double-talks us, and plays footsie with the Palestine Liberation Organization and Yasser Arafat.

Ostensibly, U.S. policy is to bring King Hussein and unaffiliated Palestinians to Washington for a "dialogue" which will be the prelude for Israeli-Jordanian peace talks at which the future of Judea, Samaria, and Gaza will be settled. But the Palestinians with whom Washington is willing to sit down are not-so-secret allies of the PLO.

What good a dialogue with King Hussein can be is another matter. The prime minister of Jordan, Zaid al-Rifai, has made it known that his country "absolutely" rules out direct negotiations with Israel and will only agree to an "international conference" that will include the Soviet Union and exclude the Israelis.

The same message was given by King Hussein to Assistant Secretary of State Richard Murphy when he journeyed, cap in hand, to Amman. King Hussein not only demanded the international conference, but also added that the PLO must be among the participants. Secretly

backing the Jordanians in this demand is our great "friend" Saudi Arabia.

At the same time, the CIA has quietly informed the National Security Council, the entire PLO terrorist apparatus has moved into Jordan, with King Hussein's blessing, and is poised for infiltration and attack from camps along the Jordan contiguous to the West Bank, where it is far more dangerous than it was in Lebanon. So we have gone back to the days before Yasser Arafat tried to overthrow the Hussein regime and the PLO was expelled from Jordan after bloody fighting.

Though King Hussein — an imported Hashemite monarch in a land that was 78 percent of the Palestine mandate — has been making pro-Soviet noises and threatening to purchase arms from the Kremlin, the Reagan administration continues to lobby for military aid to Jordan. And as toughly as it can, the State Department is putting pressure on the Israelis to accept the panel of Palestinian activists who are to "dialogue" with us.

No effort, however, is being made to make Egypt live up to the terms of its peace treaty with Israel (which was part of the Camp David Accords, to which the United States is party), systematically violated since the assassination of President Anwar Sadat.

Ironically, the White House is shutting its eyes to the terrorist buildup along the Jordan at the same time that President Reagan makes loud noises about combating the Terrorist International organized by the Soviets using the PLO as its instrumentality. Obviously to those dominating U.S. Middle East policy, all terrorists are equal, but some are more equal than others. (Increasingly, the State Department classifies Mr. Arafat as a "moderate.")

In the past, the United States

argued that it had to be "even-handed" in the Middle East to protect its access to Arab oil. But this is no longer a factor, if it ever was. Today the Arabs are begging the world to buy their oil.

What we are seeing is a return of the attitude voiced by Gen. George C. Marshall in 1948 when he urged President Truman not to recognize the newborn state of Israel because, he insisted, it would be suicidal to side with 700,000 Jews against 700 million Arabs. It was Gen. Marshall's prediction that the Arabs would mop up the Israelis in short order.

But the State Department always has gone its merry way. In the years after World War II it did its best to double-cross the Republic of China. It worked earnestly to bring about the sellout of the Chinese on Taiwan — and triumphed when Presidents Nixon and Carter performed the dirty deed.

Now the department's Arabist middle echelon is busily at work attempting to set the stage for a second Holocaust.

Fortunately for Israel, the Arab countries are too busy going for each other's jugulars to have time for the deed. What's more, most of them are opposed to turning over the West Bank and Gaza to King Hussein or to the PLO. Fortunately, too, Congress still stands foursquare behind Israel — the Black Caucus excepted.

But perhaps the time has come for a committee of the Senate to ask Secretary of State George Shultz just what he has in mind.

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